12/13/72

Dear Harold,

I just got your latest batch of letters and I have a moment, in this busy finals period, to write you a note. As for me coming down, I'll be going home 12/22, and I think it might be best if I visited you and Lil sometime between then and X 12/31, if that is OK with you. I don't return to school until mid-January, so I do have time to come in January if that is more convenient...Although, come to think of it, it probably would be better if I waited until January to come, for there are some things I'd like to do as soon as I get home, besides getting things in order, like putting the final touches on my book so I can send it off again to publishers. How about the first week in January?

The current business with Vietnam was to be expected, and I predicted to my father this summer when, just before the Repub convention, Rogers gave an interview to Knight Newspapers and said he was sure that we'd have a peace settlement either before the election or in a few weeks after the election. This clearly told me what the administration's strategy would be: make it seem like "peace was at hand" just before the election, with the plea that only if Nixon was reelected could the final touches to the settlement be worked out "in a few weeks." I said this to my father as soon as I read the interview.

It seems this is exactly what happened. In the announcement of late October, it was obvious that the US had done most of the turning around which made the agreement possible, although I think North Vietnam also gave quite a bit with regard to Thieu and the pre-election set-up. They probably were willing to accept this if they could get a guarantee before Nixon was re-elected. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ It was obvious then, however, that the whole thing was a charade as long as Thieu was not willing to go along, as he insisted he was not. How could there be a cease-fire if one of the parties doesn't agree to cease fire? It is inconceivable that Nixon could allow all of US policy to hang in the~~X~~ balance at the whim of one crummy dictator who could be out of the way with a snap of his fingers--inconceivable if you believe that Nixon really wanted peace. I don't think he did, or else he wouldn't have let Thieu stand in his way. Obviously, after the election, the US just did a 180 degree about face on several substantive issues, sufficient to force Hanoi into changing its position. Then Kissinger comes home crying that the other side is to blame for the impasse. Kissinger's news conference was a mastery of double-talk and lies, and the press, from what I've seen, bought it. There was some decent commentary on NBC by a Washington Post correspondent, plus a stupid, unthinking analysis by Valeriani. Anthony Lewis in NYT today had a decent analysis, though not complete. Last night, NBC News did a long feature on the wife of a guy killed in VN after peace was "at hand," who said she voted for Nixon and urged her friends to do the same only because she thought it imperative to get him back into office so the agreement could be concluded. This probably swayed a lot of people but I really don't think it is what decided the election. Certainly, Nixon has been allowed to get away with the dirtiest tricks. We'll have to discuss this. Must run. Best,

Howard